DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 313 900 FL 018 240

AUTHOR Leisy, Estelle Mendoza
TITLE Bilingual Kindergarten Strategy--Oral English/Spanish Self-Voice.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 7p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingualism; *English (Second Language); *Interference (Language); Kindergarten; Oral Language; *Phoneme Grapheme Correspondence; Phonetics; Primary Education; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Spanish Speaking; Visual Aids; *Young Children

ABSTRACT

Very young Spanish-English bilingual children may not perceive sound-clue illustrations presented in the classroom as they are intended to be perceived. For example, when a child is told, "A is for apple," he may also interpret the message as "A is for manzana," confusing the intended message. While the teacher may hear English only, the child's Spanish self-voice remains active and should be recognized. Use of "Pan-American" images whose names begin with the same phoneme (English "tiger"/Spanish "tigre") can reduce the disruptive impact of the Spanish self-voice and inconsistent application of English in this population. Use of visual aids consistent with this approach is also recommended. The intended effect is to gradually neutralize the Spanish self-voice and to support rather than discourage young children's confidence and classroom participation. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED313900

BILINGUAL KINDERGARTEN STRATEGY -- ORAL ENGLISH/SPANISH SELF-VOICE

Estelle Mendoza Leisy

LEISY'S PAN AMERICAN ABCs

P.O. Box 5314

Culver City, California 90231

(213) 836 - 6730

Member: California Association of Bilingual Educators

Hunter College, NYC, 1948 - Sociology, Psychology. Attended Columbia University, UCLA. Ms. Leisy is a retired, bilingual teacher. She has had over 30 years experience with Los Angeles students - kindergarten, ESL, etc. Currently, Ms. Leisy has developed a commercial PAN AMERICAN visual program for common Spanish/English letter-sounds.

FL018240

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Leisy

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bilingual HISPANIC kindergarteners do not automatically 'read' pictures silently in English. Visual ABC sound clues, such as, "A is for APPLE" may likewise be perceived as "A is for manzana" part of the time.

Alternative PAN AMERICAN images have space for a Spanish self-voice. "B is for BICYCLE" can also be 'read' by LATINOS as "B is for bicicleta" without losing the desired initial sound message.

Learning familiar Spanish/English letter sounds becomes overly complex, if bilingual HISPANICS are only exposed to traditional sound clues, with conflicting beginning sounds- BEAR (oso), BUTTERFLY (mariposa), etc. There is an ABC fast track option available to HISPANICS that other ESL students do not enjoy.

Daily life in a mainstream - English - classroom has many surprising moments for teachers and bilingual HISPANICS alike. "A is for MANZANA" is frequently the ABC message perceived by LATINO five-year-olds. Sound-clue illustrations on charts are not automatically 'read' in English as intended - A is for APPLE. Learning letter-sounds, without visual images which consistently demonstrate one particular beginning sound - BEAR (oso), BUTTERFLY (mariposa)- places bilingual HISPANICS at a disadvantage. A process that could be simple has become complex.

Although the teacher may hear English only, the students' Spanish self-voice remains active, and needs to be recognized. Picture viewing on charts and workpages is a self-voice activity. LATINO students themselves choose picture names. The teacher hears nothing. The desired English ABC message may not always be the signal bilingual HISPANICS receive - "C is for CAT (gato).

Special support strategies, such as the use of PAN AMERICAN images - TIGER (tigre), CAMEL (camello) - can reduce the disruptive impact of an ORAL ENGLISH/SPANISH SELF-VOICE presence. English, the students' second language, arrives in stages, in bits and pieces. The students' oral voice and inner voice do not simultaneously shift into English. However, PAN AMERICAN symbols - BOAT (barco), BARREL (barril) - do have space for the students' Spanish self-voice, thus the desired initial sound-signal is sustained. The alternative of postponing reading skills instruction in order to strengthen the HISPANICS' <u>self-voice</u> identification of illustrations in English (ESL) is not essential. When sound clues represent single, consistent messages, familiar letter sound associations are simple to establish.

While it has always been obvious to all that success in a mainstream classroom depends upon the HISPANICS' ability to understand and speak English, there are situations where students must also think in English. But, there are legitimate reasons why those five-year-old LATINOS, whose mothers do not speak English, would not think in English, the second language. Only in time, in school, will thinking in English develop.

Bilingual five and six year olds do realize that they must speak Spanish to their mother and English to their teacher in order to be understood. But when kindergarteners quietly look at pictures on charts and workpages and no one is listening, English terms may not always be the language of choice. At one time, LATINOS may think BEAR, but at the next glance, they may think oso. Thus illustrations do not have consistent names, reliable beginning sounds - varying according to the language code of the moment, or whether oral or silent voice is being used.

However, the sounds of the alphabet cannot be firmly set with sound clues whose messages fluctuate, CAT (gato), DOG (perro), etc. Many times teachers discontinue the ABC focus of instruction to wait for such time when students do identify illustrations in English, with both oral and inner voices. Other times, teachers slow down the ABC pace considerably, asking HISPANICS to do sound matching workpages over again, until students get it "right." For unless students can demonstrate an ability to distinguish similar beginning sounds, visually, "readiness' for letter-sound instruction is not apparent. But, are there other, more academically productive options, or support strategies, which could be utilized, should an ORAL ENGLISH/ SPANISH SELF-VOICE dilemma persist?

PAN AMERICAN visuals - BOAT (barco), LION (león) align the HISPANICS' oral and inner voice; therefore the momentum of ABC sound instruction is not disturbed. There are at least 19 common Spanish/ English letter-sounds, D, M, T, etc., that permit language unity. PAN AMERICAN images retain the desired message for bilingual LATINO students, thus a basic core of familiar Spanish/English letter sounds can be taught without undue delay.

Determining if traditional word-pictures - BEAR (oso), BUTTERFLY (mariposa) - begin alike is a one dimensional issue for monolingual students, but it is a two-part question for bilingual HISPANICS. First, the hidden ESL quiz must be resolved correctly before similiar beginning sounds can be identified. LATINOS cannot demonstrate initial sound awareness as effectively as others. Even the teacher is never sure of the reason for mismatch sound comparisons. Sometimes Spanish picture names are the cause, other times incorrect phonics' perceptions are the genuine reason. Thus the bilingual HISPANICS' "readiness" to proceed to individual-letter sound associations is seldom clearly indicated.

Teachers are most aware of the disruptions caused by the LATINOS' inability to understand spoken English, but equally damaging are misunderstandings created by non-verbal material. Consider, for example, how often teachers can baffle a five-year-old HISPANIC. First, it might be stated, "These pictures start with the same sound," and the student might see a set of flashcards, such as this:

MOON/luna (m/l) MOUSE/ratón (m/r) MIRROR/espejo (m/e)

Well, sometimes they do, but many times they don't. These continual showing are a very confusing entrance into distinguishing initial sound similarities and differences.

Many bilingual HISPANIC kindergarteners become confused and discouraged by the mixed signal potential of traditional sound clues. Some students are not ready to sort aside non-valid Spanish terms, an additional challenge. LATINOS from illiterate homes require extra support, easy-to-use material, which allows for various language stages. Otherwise, students may attempt "No-Win", apples and oranges, Spanish/English word comparisons: BEAR and mariposa do not begin alike. The involuntary Spanish self-voice will lessen over time, until that happens very young HISPANICS may doubt that their resources are adequate, even for the familiar aspects of the letter-sound process.

PAN AMERICAN visuals neutralize a Spanish self-voice. Bilingual LATINOS work within a PAN AMERICAN Safety Net, same outer and inner voice signals - TELEPHONE (telefono), TURTLE (tortuga), etc. Recognition of the numerous common Spanish/English letter sounds - D, M, T, etc. - builds the HISPANICS' self-esteem, precludes early alienation. Students become active, enthusiastic participants.

Without letter-sound knowledge, students can not make "educated" word guesses. Word recall, then depends on the strength of memory, not a strong factor with children from illiterate homes. PAN AMERICAN images permit familiar letter-sound instruction to proceed quickly. An ORAL ENGLISH/SPANISH SELF-VOICE language phase can function in harmony so that bilingual HISPANIC kindergarteners work with the same type of "No Double Talk" ABC visuals their native English-speaking peers have always seen.